

# Veterinarians Join the PHRC through a **Unique, Collaborative Partnership**

In October 2006, following Hurricane Katrina, Congress enacted the Pets Evacuation and Transportation Standards Act (PETS Act). This legislation requires State and local governments to plan for the evacuation, rescue, sheltering and essential needs of household pets and service animals in the wake of a disaster. Household pets and service animals play an important part in people's daily lives. As was demonstrated in Hurricane Katrina, a person's decision to take protective action can be greatly influenced by the safety of their animals. Under the provisions of the PETS Act, pet-related emergency activities such as pet rescue, evacuation and sheltering costs are reimbursable through FEMA.

The Disaster Preparedness Committee of the Seattle-King County Veterinary Medical Association and the Zoonotic Disease Program in Public Health recently conducted a survey of all veterinarians living or practicing in King County. Over 100 King County veterinarians have volunteered to assist in responding to animals in a disaster. The Committee has joined forces with the Public Health Reserve Corps to provide a mechanism for these veterinarians to train and coordinate with existing authorities in disaster. It is our goal to provide King County with a database of veterinarians who are motivated and trained to respond effectively to disasters that affect animals.

The veterinarians enrolled in this program are skilled in veterinary medical care as well as animal restraint and handling. They may also provide shelter, supplies and equipment, as well as administrative help as needed. Veterinarians who enroll with PHRC will have access to other functions of PHRC, such as drills and training courses in all aspects of disaster response, and will be able to play a role in other areas of disaster response.

Public Health Veterinary Responders will be summoned as needs arise and work within the framework of animal disaster planning being developed by King County Animal Control. These veterinarians also employ other people with skills needed in animal sheltering, such as animal handlers, animal technicians, and their administrative staff. We hope to eventually include these individuals in the Public Health Reserve Corps as well, to further develop King County's ability to respond to animals in disasters.

# Save the Date!

#### **PHRC New** Volunteer **Orientation**

January 26, 2009

If you are a volunteer who has not attended an in-person orientation, see page 3 for information on the next scheduled orientation.

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# Washington System for Tracking Resources, Alerts and Communications (WATrac)

WATrac is a Web-based software system that tracks emergency department status and bed availability daily and provides incident management for disaster response. These functions provide a central clearinghouse for incident management and situation awareness for the healthcare system during a disaster response.

Implementation of WATrac Phase 1, bed tracking and emergency department status, is on track for completion by December 31, 2008. At that point, hospitals in all Public Health Emergency Preparedness & Response (PHEPR) Regions which had previously used the Harborview tracking system will be up and running on WATrac.

Planning has begun for Phase 2 (incident management) implementation. The WATrac User's Group, which met December 1, has recommended pharmaceutical and resource tracking, and knowledgebase document cataloging, as priorities for implementation in the coming year. Discussions regarding Phase 2 implementation will be scheduled during the first part of 2009.

## **Success of Public Health's ACF Exercise**

In mid-November Public Health – Seattle & King County and Washington State Department of Health co-sponsored a full scale exercise testing our pandemic influenza response plans. Over 280 Public Health staff, partners and PHRC volunteers participated in the four day exercise. Many called the exercise "ambitious", as the objectives tested the following capabilities:

- Emergency Communications
- Critical Resource Logistics and Distribution (non-medical)
- Emergency Public Information and Warning
- Public Safety and Security Response
- Emergency Medical Screening and EMS response
- Emergency Operations Center Activation and Management
- Epidemiological Surveillance and Investigation
- Medical Supplies Management, Tracking and Distribution
- Activation of Alternate Medical Facilities
- Mobilization of Volunteer Staff
- On-site Incident Management
- Public Health Laboratory and Testing
- Ensuring Responder Safety and Health

During the exercise, staff were mobilized into emergency response teams: Communicable Disease Epidemiology Team, Communications Surge Team, Public Information Call Center Team, Field Response Logistics Team, Area Command Center, Public Health Amateur Radio, and the Employee Health and Safety Surge Team. Exercise activities occurred at multiple locations in Seattle including the Chinook Building, the Distribution Center and Seattle Center. Public Health activated and tested several capabilities during the exercise including a new information management system (WATrac) to document incident information, and a tool for alerting community based organizations called the Community Communication Network (CCN).

On the final day of the exercise, Public Health staff and PHRC volunteers set up and activated an Alternate Care Facility at Seattle Center's Exhibition Hall. Serving as a field hospital to treat patients during disasters, this site was equipped, staffed and ready for patients in just over six hours. Tours were conducted of the facility for healthcare executives and elected officials, local media, emergency response organizations, hospital staff within and outside King County, state agencies and federal officials.

This exercise relied upon close coordination and active participation among partner agencies including fire departments, law enforcement, hospitals (all King County hospitals participated in the exercise), local emergency management, policy leaders, and community based organizations.

The event clearly demonstrated that our ability to activate emergency response plans, mobilize resources, and ultimately protect the health and safety of the public is directly linked to the professionalism, dedication and support of Public Health staff, leaders and partners.

To view photos of the event access the following link: http://publichealth.metrokc.gov/graphics/imagebank/pandemonium2008/

## **PHRC Training Opportunities**

#### **PHRC New Volunteer Orientation\***

January 26, 2009, 6:30 – 8:30 PM

Location: PHSKC, Chinook Building, Ground Floor, Training Room 121,

401 Fifth Ave, Seattle

You must sign up by e-mailing Mandi George at mandi.george@kingcounty. **gov**. A confirmation will be sent to you 1-2 weeks prior to training.

#### **Public Health Preparedness Summitt 2009:**

The Changing Face of Preparedness

February 18 - 20, 2009 Location: San Diego, CA

More information, including scholarship information, can be found at

http://www.phprep.org.

#### Psychological First Aid In Practice: Helping People Cope with Disasters and Public Health Emergencies\*

Saturday, March 14, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Location: PHSKC, Chinook Building, Ground Floor, Training Room 121,

401 Fifth Ave, Seattle

You must sign up by e-mailing Mandi George at mandi.george@kingcounty. **gov**. A confirmation will be sent to you 1-2 weeks prior to training.

#### Integrated Medical, Public Health, Preparedness, and Response Training

**Summit:** Learning Together as a Nation

April 4-8 2009

Location: Dallas, TX

More information, including scholarship information, can be found at

http://www.hhstrainingsummit.org/

\*Unfortunately, due to King County budget contraints, providing food or beverages for events or reimbursement for parking is no longer allowed by Public Health. Volunteers are, however, welcome to bring in their own food and beverages.

# **Update on ID Badges for PHRC Volunteers**

Identification badges have been issued to those volunteers who have submitted photos to the PHRC program. However, at a recent statewide Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) meeting basic standards were set as to what specifically needs to be included on all ID MRC badges so there are a few small changes to the PHRC badges. Therefore, for those of you who have been issued an PHRC ID badge already will be sent a new, revised badge in the coming weeks (no need to send in another photo).

For new volunteers and/or volunteers who have not sent in a photo should send in a 'headshot' photo, preferrably an electronic version, so an ID badge can be issued to you. It is now a requirement that ID badges be presented at PHRC related functions and activations. Please send in your photo to Mandi George or Kevin Lawson. Should you have additional questions regarding badges please contact Mandi George or Kevin Lawson.

# Training!

# **National Incident** Management System (NIMS) **Training**

PHRC volunteers are required to fulfill two specific NIMS online training courses upon registration:

- 1. IS-100.HC Introduction to the Incident Command System for Healthcare/Hospitals: https://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/ is100HC.asp
- 2. IS-700 Introduction to the National Incident Management System: http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/ is700.asp

Volunteers should email copies of completion certificates to mandi.george@kingcounty.gov.

# THANK YOU!

A huge thank you to PHRC volunteers who responded and made themselves available during the holidays for the December storm response. Public Health Area Command Center was activated and preparing to open medical needs shelters should the healthcare system become overwhelmed due to power outages, patient demand, etc. Many of you responded within seconds of our requests expressing your availability and willingness to help. In the end, a list of nearly 40 volunteers were available to assist. Amazing!

A storm debrief is scheduled for mid-January. Mandi is soliciting feedback regarding the PHRC call out and activation process to share at the debrief. Please feel free to share your thoughts/comments by emailing her by January 10, 2009.

# PHRC Program Manager Deploys to Maternity Leave

As some of you may already know, Mandi George is expecting her second child in early February. Beginning February 1 she plans to take 12 weeks of maternity leave. While she takes this time with new baby, husband and three year old daughter, the PHRC program will continue its normal functions with the hard work of existing PHRC program staff.

Listed on the last page of the newsletter is contact information for the PHRC staff who will resume the functions of the program while Mandi's away. Keep this information in a memorable place should questions or concerns arise between February-April, 2009.

She will miss the program (her third baby) and volunteers, even for a short while! However, I'm sure lack of sleep and hazy days will preoccupy her missing work. She will be ready to return in May!

# **Public Health Mutual Aid Agreement**

In the past year, a workgroup with representatives and their legal counsels from Public Health Seattle and King County, Snohomish Health District, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, and Kitsap County Health District, have worked together to develop a Public Health Mutual Aid Agreement. During this process, the statewide team of practitioners, attorneys, public health officials, and others, examined and analyzed which state laws and regulations might be waived during a public health related emergency. Risk managers, insurance providers, internal administrative committees, decision-makers, and some local emergency management provided review. Although the initial work was to develop a mutual aid agreement for the Puget Sound area local health jurisdictions (LHJs), other LHJs across the state had expressed interest in signing on. The resulting MAA is now applicable for all LHJs. Currently nine additional LHJs are considering signing.

To date the following jurisdictions have signed on:
Public Health Seattle and King County, Snohomish Health District, TacomaPierce County Health Department, Kitsap County Health District, Whatcom
County Health Department, Yakima Health District, Grant County Health
District, Benton-Franklin Health District, Chelan-Douglas Health District,
and Walla Walla County Health Department

In a parallel project, the Olympic Peninsula tribes are working with Region 2 Public Health to create a model mutual aid agreement to share resources during an emergency. The tribes include the Suquamish, Port Gamble S'Klallam, Jamestown S'Klallam, Makah, Hoh, Lower Elwha Klallam, and Quileute tribes. Each of these eight tribes is independent and has a separate governance structure, but all share a common unified Public Health system.

# **PHRC Volunteer Needs**

- Licensed Medical Volunteers:
  - o Lab Technicians
  - o Mental Health Providers
  - o Paramedics
  - o Pharmacists
  - o Physicians and Physician Assistants
  - o Psychiatrists
- o Registered Nurses
- o and many more!

- Non-Medical Volunteers:
  - o Call Center Operators
  - o General/Administrative Support
  - o Hospitality Workers
  - o Interpreters
- o Logistics Workers
- o Spiritual Care Workers
- o Any adult who wants to help!

For more information about the Public Health Reserve Corps, including how to apply and volunteer job descriptions, visit: www.kingcounty.gov/health or email phrc@kingcounty.gov.





# PHRC Program Contact Information for February - April, 2009:

#### **Primary Contacts:**

Amie Larsen, (questions regarding volunteer application processing, call out & deployment) Human Resource Analyst 401 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1300, Seattle 98104 206-263-8733 office 206-423-0534 mobile

amie.larsen@kingcounty.gov

Kevin Lawson, (questions regarding training, WASECURES alert system, & badging) Americorps VISTA Volunteer 401 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1300, Seattle 98104 206-263-8034 office kevin.lawson@kingcounty.gov

#### **Secondary Contacts:**

Bryan Heartsfield, (general questions if unable to connect with primary contacts)
Preparedness Health & Medical Operations
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